

JESUS OF NAZARETH

THE ANOINTED OF GOD

P. COOK



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*“Come unto Me, all ye that
labor and are heavy laden: and
ye shall find rest unto your
souls.”*

The Great Invitation
of Jesus.

JESUS OF NAZARETH

THE ANOINTED OF GOD

OR

THE INNER HISTORY OF A
CONSECRATED LIFE

BY

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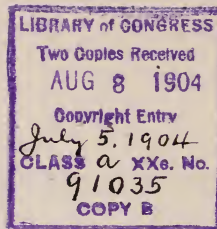


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TO
F. W. and M. S.
I AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATE
THIS BOOK.

P R E F A C E .

This "Life of Jesus of Nazareth" was prepared originally as a lecture and it has been thought best to retain the lecture-style in this somewhat expanded form. Our aim has been to give in as brief a space as possible, a connected and vivid account of the life and teachings of our Lord, presenting him as he appeared to his friends and disciples rather than in his significance for doctrinal theology. It is best that the consecration and stainless purity of his life should convince our heart before skeptical reason get busy in building or destroying creeds. We have endeavored therefore to portray the high nobility of his personality rather than to make of his life mere building-stones for a doctrinal system.

This is probably the shortest "Life of Christ" ever written, yet all the really significant events of his public ministry* have been touched upon and we hope that in these days when men are weary of ponderous volumes, this unpretentious narrative may find a welcome by reason of its brevity.

Our historical sources, the four gospels, have been used in accordance with the assured results of modern scholarship. For this reason the gospel of Mark and the material common to Matthew and Luke, generally called "Logia," have throughout been accorded the pre-eminence.

P. Cook.

Breckenridge, Minn., May, 1904.

* Those not discussed in the body of the work are referred to in foot notes at their proper place. If the reader will look up these, he will have a complete text-book on the life of Jesus.

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JESUS OF NAZARETH
THE ANOINTED OF GOD

JESUS OF NAZARETH THE ANOINTED OF GOD

OR

THE INNER HISTORY OF A CONSECRATED LIFE.

§ 1. *Introduction.*

Jesus and the Perplexities of our Inner Life.

Man, creation's masterpiece, is endowed with more divinity than all the world beside, yet his history is as much a history of his shortcomings as of his achievement. Great in intelligence, weak in moral conduct,—bending nature's mightiest forces to his will, yet powerless to tame the passions in his breast,—lord of the whole earth, but not master of himself: thus is his glory mingled with disgrace. In despair we ask, Was power of self-direction and freedom given to us only to be a blot upon the fairest of God's fair works? Are we strong only to sin, have we been exalted only to fall, were we born human only to be a great failure? Our better nature says No, but our history still gives the lie to our aspira-

tions. Our lapses from the path of rectitude are distressingly continuous. We are ever struggling, but the victory is not yet in sight.

These sentiments have oppressed every sincere heart. Yet to feel them, to be conscious of shortcomings and stretching after unattained ideals, are the beginnings of spiritual excellency. If the course of the moral development of our race has been slow and painful, still it has been upward. Though we are not perfect as yet, we have within us the promise that sometime we shall attain to the full fruition of the deepest yearning of our best moments.

If our night has not yet passed away, still we are moving toward the dawn. Nor has it been a starless night. At times we have tasted of the "peace that passeth understanding." There has been much of noble manhood and womanhood amidst the sin and sorrow of the world. Consecrated lives have not been lacking, and in the One life that by reason of its unequaled purity stands out pre-eminently among all others, the day star is risen unto us, guiding the perplexed sea-farer like a beacon-light unto the coveted goal.

It is not a fairy tale that I am about to set before you. Jesus of Nazareth is not a fabled personage from the realm of hero-legends beyond the pale of history. Nor did he live

his life upon enchanted ground in the airy regions of perpetual sunshine and peace. He lived it upon earth, engulfed in the same maelstrom of temptation and evil with ourselves. But he has come out of it victorious and uncontaminated, bringing to light the secret of victory over sin and self.—Come with me now to the land of the Jews and to a time nineteen hundred years ago.

THE PREPARATION.

§ 2. *The Preaching of John the Baptist and
Baptism of Jesus.**

Mk. 1:1-11; Mt. 3:7-12 = Lk. 3:7-17.

In the time of Tiberius Cæsar a strange man, by the name of John, later called the Baptist, clad in a garment of camel's hair and living on locusts and wild honey, appeared in the Jordan valley. He was a prophet sent from God preaching righteousness and proclaiming the long-hoped-for kingdom of God to be at hand. High and low he called to prepare for it by repentance lest it should prove, not blessing, but judgment and devouring fire. The Jewish people were deeply stirred and they flocked to him from every village and hamlet. His fame also reached the little town in Galilee, where Jesus lived. The report of John's proclamation awakened an eager response in the young carpenter's heart. He laid down his hammer and chisel and left the Nazareth home that he might see this prophet for himself, and know more of his message. So he came to the Jordan. There he stood among the crowds listen-

* To save space we pass over the well-known narratives of the birth and infancy of Jesus. Mt., chapt. I and II, and Lk., chapt. I and II.

ing to that austere preacher who knew no fear of man, to whom the vanities of the world, riches and fame, were all as nothing: a lover of righteousness and hater of hypocrisy. Jesus recognized him at once as the greatest ever born of women and felt that he could be no other than Elijah of old come to prepare the way before God.

The coming of the kingdom of God was what Jesus had prayed and most earnestly longed for in his carpenter's shop at Nazareth. The Jordan prophet was preparing the people for its reception, baptizing all who were ready to bury their sinful past and rise to a new life. To this great work Jesus could not be indifferent, so he too stepped down into the river, not, however, to wash away his sins, but to consecrate his life henceforth to the kingdom of God. In this act of consecration, while rising from the waters, to his spiritual eye the heavens were opened and he heard the voice of God saying to him, "Thou art my Son, my Beloved, I am well-pleased in Thee."

The mantle of Elijah had fallen upon John the Baptist, but upon Jesus had come the Spirit of God. John was called to be the herald of the kingdom's approach: Jesus was God's Anointed to usher it in.

§ 3. *The Temptation of Jesus.*

Mk. 1: 12, 13; Mt. 4: 1-11 = Lk. 4: 1-13.

After this sacred baptismal experience Jesus could learn no more at the brinks of the Jordan, nor was there one to share with him a like experience. Only one thing could he do, go to the wilderness and in solitude ponder what God would have him do. He was too overjoyed to eat or drink, for a season the fulness of life in his soul refused to be bound to the earth by the wants of the body.

And what did he learn there in the wilderness of Judea? First of all that abiding spiritual life is only to be had as the price of victory over temptation. Even a baptism with the Spirit of God does not drive the tempter away. The battle must be fought to the last inch, and the higher the call, the severer the temptation.

After some days, when Jesus had become hungry, the tempter said to him, "If thou art the son of God, turn these stones into bread, test your experience of divine sonship by a miracle." But trust in God propped up on signs and miracles is only a bastard faith. True religion consists not in getting at our selfish ends by a pious and miraculous shortcut over

the well-ordered course of nature, but in trustful waiting and patient endurance of the hardships of our heavenly Father's appointing. To be a child of God means to have child-like and implicit faith in His providence.

Jesus won this first battle and was enabled to rise superior to worldly anxiety. For the guidance of his own life he could say, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." He had a higher calling now than the mere care for food and raiment. To seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness was henceforth his vocation.

But there are other and more insidious temptations than those connected with our bread and butter. The life of trust is not without its dangers. God's best gifts may be perverted to unholy uses. The applause of our fellow men is dear to us. Few can resist the temptation to become the popular idol and use the easiest means to this end. Why should not the special favorite of God give to the multitudes its sweetest morsel—a miraculous sign from heaven? "Ascend to the pinnacle of the temple and cast thyself down," suggested the tempter, for it is written 'God will send his angels to bear thee up lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.' It will dazzle the crowds. It is the

sure way to gain Israel's ear for thy message." But calmly Jesus answered "Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God" and so won the victory over the temptation to make religion the minister of one's vanity and self-glorification.

Yet once more the tempter appealed to him. This time to the love of power. In every healthy man there is an inborn desire to conquer the world. Jesus' eyes swept over its kingdoms. Can he bring them into subjection to his high ideals? Can he rule them? Not by truth and integrity. But they can be gained if the path of righteousness is not too strictly adhered to. A very little winking at evil, a slight bend of the knee, is sufficient. "All these things will I give to thee, if thou wilt but fall down and worship me," said the tempter. If a man will only sell his soul he can purchase the whole world. But Jesus stood this test also: to the least suggestion of questionable dealing he replied, "Get thee behind me, Satan."

A threefold victory he had gained over these three subtlest temptations that strike at our inner life. "Tempted in all things as we are, he is able to succor them that are tempted."

THE GALILEAN MINISTRY.

§ 4. *Jesus' First Preaching and First Disciples.**

Mk. 1 : 14-20. (Lk. 5 : 1-11, John 21 : 1-11.)

Jesus returned from the wilderness, but the voice of John was now silent. He had aroused the ire of Herod by his rebuke of sin in high places and had been cast into prison at Machaerus. The crowds had left the Jordan valley and Jesus went back to Galilee. There he began to preach, but his message was not one of judgment, like John's. True, he too preached repentance, but not in order to escape wrath, but to be welcomed into the love of God. It was in Galilee, along the shores of its beautiful lake, that the good news of fellowship between man and the living God was first heard. But there was nothing peculiar about the preacher. He carried no extra piety about in holy garments, rather wishing to be known only by the unobtrusive, though yet so significant, title "son of man," because he longed to identify himself with every human soul in its seeking after God, esteeming it greater priv-

* The Gospel of John, chapter I-IV should here be consulted for an account of Jesus' early Judean ministry.

ilege to give himself in sympathy to all than to have distinction above his brethren. Therefore he came not as the whirlwind or the lightning and drew no gaping multitudes after him. Almost unheeded was his message, until one day in Capernaum some fishermen heard him. His words struck a tender chord in their hearts. They were hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and here was One who could fill their longings. So Peter and Andrew with James and John left their nets to follow Jesus.

§ 5. *The First Sabbath in Capernaum.*

Mk. I : 21-34.

On the sabbath-day Jesus went to the synagogue in Capernaum. He addressed the worshippers there, but he taught not as the scribes. He spoke not in formulas of pious phraseology, but told straightforwardly what he had in his heart. A demoniac, who happened to be among the listeners, upon hearing his earnest words, hailed him as the Holy One of God. Jesus, however, rebuked the unclean spirit and the afflicted man was healed.

At the close of the synagogue service Peter took his new found friend home with him.

Having welcomed him to his heart, he wished that the Master's benediction might also come to his home, and it came in a way he had not anticipated. His wife's mother was sick with a fever. When Jesus was told of it, he stepped to the bedside, took her by the hand and the fever left her. At the presence of Jesus the shadow fled from the fisherman's house.

The healing of the demoniac and of Peter's wife's mother spread like wild-fire through Capernaum. The people in the synagogue had marvelled at the words of grace that fell from Jesus' lips, but they had been much more impressed with the cure of the demoniac. They waited until evening, for it was not lawful to do work on the sabbath-day, nor would the Pharisees allow the healing of the sick on that day if they might survive till the morrow. But with sun-down the sabbath ended and the whole city gathered at the door bringing their sick. Jesus healed many of them, yet he had not come to be a healer of the body, he meant to be a physician of the soul. Therefore he retired to the fields that night for prayer to obtain strength against the temptation to drift into a mere wonderworker.

§ 6. *Preaching in the Galilean Villages.*

Mk. 1:35-45. (Lk. 17:11-19.)

Capernaum had become too excited to listen to Jesus' preaching and when Peter with the other disciples found him in the morning and told him of the clamor of the people, he said to them, "Let us go elsewhere, into the next towns, that I may preach there, for I will not be turned aside from my mission." So he went throughout Galilee preaching in the synagogues.

We have no further record of this preaching-tour except that a leper was cleansed. To the disease of leprosy Judaism had added the stigma of ritual uncleanness, thus ostracizing its victims from human sympathy. Such an unfortunate one, doubly afflicted by disease and the super-righteousness of Pharisaism, appealed to Jesus. What shall the preacher of the good news of God's kingdom do? Shall he drive the sick man from him in holy indignation and then go out and bathe himself seven times to wash off the pollution of the leper's shadow? Thus the Pharisee served his God by despising his suffering brother. Not so Jesus of Nazareth. He was moved with compassion for him.

He stretched forth his hand and touched the leper, breaking a commandment of Moses, but giving assurance of fellow-feeling to an afflicted brother.

Such an act Pharisaism could never forgive. It was a deathblow to this great system of manufactured righteousness and artificial salvation. From this time on Jesus and the Pharisees could no longer be anything but enemies. The religion of purity of heart and the religion of ritualistic good works cannot dwell together in peace.

GROWING HOSTILITY OF THE
SCRIBES AND PHARISEES.

Jesus and Human Sinfulness.

Jesus and External Religion.

§ 7. *Jesus and Human Sinfulness.*

(a) *The Paralytic of Capernaum.* Mk. 2: 1-12.

After this preaching-tour Jesus returned to Capernaum. Since he had found his first disciples there, he made this village his headquarters. His fame had greatly increased and as soon as the people heard of his return, they gathered to see and hear him. A paralytic also had become greatly interested in him. Unable to walk, he persuaded four of his friends to carry him to the house where Jesus was teaching. But they arrived too late, for the crowd was already solidly packed around the door so that they could not get in. This only made them the more determined, and nothing daunted, they carry the paralytic up the outer stairway leading to the top of the flat-roofed house. They dig through the mud-roof and let their friend down in the very presence of Jesus. He is pleased with their earnestness, and interpreting the paralytic's deepest desire, says to him: "Son, thy sins are forgiven." Our real life we live within. The paralysis of our moral pow-

ers we feel more keenly than physical helplessness. Divine forgiveness alone can heal this mortal wound and to the paralytic's sin-sick soul the words of Jesus were like life from death.

But the scribes, Jesus' enemies, also were there. In their vaunted self-righteousness they despised the way to God by penitence, and refused to rejoice at the prodigal's return. They murmured: "Blasphemy! blasphemy! how dare this man pronounce forgiveness of sins." As Jesus had read the desire of the paralytic, so also he perceived their mutterings and said to them: "Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Which is easier, To say to the paralytic, Thy sins are forgiven, or to say, Arise, take up thy bed and walk?" But that ye may know that the son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (he says to the paralytic) "I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thy house." And he arose and straightway took up the bed and went forth before them all. And they were all amazed, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

(b) *The Call of Levi (Matthew)*. Mk. 2: 13-17.

Jesus continued his ministry in Capernaum and the neighborhood of the sea of Galilee. At

this time the Jewish people were subject to Rome and consequently had to pay taxes to a heathen government. All peoples resent the payment of taxes to their conquerors, but to the Jews it was a double thorn that they, God's chosen people, should pay taxes to idolaters. For this reason the few Jews who, for the sake of personal profit, could be found to act as tax-collectors, drew down upon themselves from their countrymen a full measure of hatred and contempt. They were held to be, not only unpatriotic, but also irreligious, tenfold more heathenish than the heathen themselves. It was a religious merit to despise a publican.

In charge of the custom-house at Capernaum was a man by the name of Levi or Matthew. He had had abundant opportunity to see and hear Jesus and had not been slow to notice that he was different from the scribes. He saw that the teacher from Nazareth valued men neither according to their profession nor their zeal in observing religious conventionalities. Instead of living in holy separation from his fellowmen, he was full of sympathy for all, making every man feel that in spite of all failings, he was possessed of a soul of infinite value. Even they that had fallen lowest felt a new respect for themselves, because Jesus respected them.—One day he was passing the

publican's place of toll. Business was not brisk. Jesus lingered and Matthew made bold to enter into conversation with him. Little by little he unburdened his heart and finally told of his desire to be a better man. This sacred hour ended by Matthew leaving the custom-house to follow Jesus.

The call of Matthew to be one of his disciples was altogether out of harmony with the prevailing ideas of religion. He was a publican, an outcast, and Judaism knew nothing of seeking to reclaim the lost. Jewish pride could hardly have enjoyed heaven unless it could see the Gentiles committed to the flames of Gehenna. The zest of being the chosen people consists in being able to look down upon somebody left out. The Pharisees were proselyters, but it was only the clique-spirit that actuated them.

Matthew now made a great feast in honor of Jesus and invited his fellow-publicans to it. This gave the scribes an opportunity to vent their jealousy against Jesus. Tauntingly they said to his disciples "Your Master?—he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners," to which Jesus replied, "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call self-righteous conceit, but contrite sinners to the kingdom of God."

The difference between Jesus and the Pharisees toward human sinfulness is even more strikingly brought out by two other incidents in our Lord's ministry.

(c) *The Sinful Woman.* Lk. 7: 36-50.

The evangelist Luke relates how a Pharisee invited Jesus to dine with him. While he was reclining at table there came a sinful woman, who through Jesus' preaching had been led to forsake her sinful ways. She brought an alabaster cruse of ointment and standing at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. Then she kissed them and anointed them with the ointment. When Simon, the Pharisee, saw this, he said within himself, "This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, that she is a sinner." Jesus said unto him, "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee." And he saith, "Teacher, say on." Jesus said, "A certain lender had two debtors; the one owed five hundred shillings and the other fifty. When they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him most?" Simon answered and said, "He, I suppose, to whom he forgave most." And he said unto him, "Thou

hast rightly judged." And turning to the woman he said unto Simon, "Seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath wetted my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. Thou gavest me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, 'Her sins which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much.' But to whom little is forgiven the same loveth little." Righteous Simon could not understand the gratitude of a penitent soul, he had never helped a heart in distress. He was too good for that.

(d) *The Woman Taken in Adultery.* John 7:53-8:11.

The gospel of John preserves another instance of this kind from the close of Jesus' ministry. It was during the last few days when he was teaching in the temple that the scribes and Pharisees brought a woman taken in adultery and set her before him saying, "Teacher, this woman hath been taken in adultery, in the very act. The law of Moses commands us to stone such; what sayest thou of her?" They thought they had here an opportunity to bring him into conflict either with the law of Moses or the civil

authorities. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground. When they kept on pressing him for an answer, he lifted himself up and said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Conscience-smitten they went out every one. When Jesus and the woman were left alone he said to her, "Woman, where are thy accusers? Did no man condemn thee?" She said, "No man, Lord." And he said, "Neither do I condemn thee, go thy way, from henceforth sin no more."

Such tenderness begat hope in the callous heart that not all was lost. It was an inspiration to begin a new life. Jesus' contact with the sinful did not drag him down to their level. His deep yearning for their spiritual regeneration awakened their dormant better nature to blossom forth once more, like sunshine in spring kisses the barren earth into radiant green.

§ 8. *Jesus and External Religion.*(a) *Fasting.* Mk. 2: 18-22.

The common people heard Jesus gladly, nevertheless in some respects they, too, were mystified by his conduct. This seems to have been the case with regard to fasting, which was universally considered a meritorious religious exercise. Therefore they came to him once and said, "John's disciples and the Pharisees fast. You are a teacher of religion, why then do you not teach your disciples to fast?" He answered "The kingdom of God has come. This is good news and who celebrates good news with fasting?" Religion fills the soul with joy, and therefore, like a wedding-feast, it is not an occasion for fasting.

(b) *Sabbath-Observance.* Mk. 2: 23-3: 6.*

Still more incomprehensible to his contemporaries must have been Jesus' attitude toward the sabbath. According to their ideas, he flagrantly broke it. You must read the Talmud in order to know what a plague the scribes had made of the day that should be the light of all

* Compare here Mt. 12: 9-14; Lk. 13: 10-17; 14: 1-6, and John 5: 1-47; 7: 15-24.

the days. Numerous controversies between Jesus and the Pharisees on this point are recorded in the gospels. He allowed his disciples, when they were hungry, to rub out ears of grain on the sabbath. Repeatedly he healed the sick on that day, all of which were unpardonable sins in the eyes of the scribes.

(c) *Ceremonial Defilment.* Mk. 7: 1-23.

At the close of the Galilean ministry we read of a conflict on another point between Jesus and Pharisaism. Some scribes who had come from Jerusalem, took him to task for allowing his disciples to eat without ceremonial handwashing. He answered that nothing from without can make a man unclean, but from within, out of the heart of men evil thoughts proceed, which defile them. The Pharisees made much of holiness, but it was a holiness of pots and pans. They cleansed their vessels instead of purifying their hearts. Fasting, sabbath-keeping, levitical ablutions, giving alms (Mt. 6: 2), paying tithes (Mt. 23: 23), saying prayers (Mt. 6: 5f) are externalities that leave the secret springs of human conduct untouched, therefore Jesus stigmatized such things as heathen religion (Mt. 6: 7). He charged its advocates with perverting morality through religion (Mk. 7: 8-13) and those, who

had set up things ethically indifferent as commandments of God, he branded as hypocrites, vipers (Mt. 23 : 23), as wolves in sheep's clothing (Mt. 7 : 15).

On this account Jesus has been accused of the use of intemperate language. But if he was himself in earnest he could not speak otherwise. He had come to make men free, to lift them into moral self-independence. Yet our spiritual emancipation cannot take place so long as we are good only because we must on pain of penalty, or are cajoled into it by the hope of gain. It can come only by enthroning a God-enlightened conscience as supreme in our inner life, leading us to spontaneous willing of the good as the real expression of our God-given nature. Not till we enter into this spiritual autonomy are we true sons of God.

But legalism, statutes and ordinances, enslave the soul. They are the means whereby the master tyrannizes over the slave and gains his hatred. They do not lead to union with the Father's will. If Jesus came to bring men to God, he must break down the religion of external works, which is only self-seeking in a thin disguise. And the more sincere he was, the deeper must be his revulsion from unreality and hollowness. If he had not hurled his ana-

themas against the hypocrisy of Pharisaism, we could never have been sure of his own integrity, for he that does not hate evil cannot love the good.

THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS.

THE FIVE GREAT DISCOURSES
ON THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

§ 9. *The Teachings of Jesus.**

THE FIVE GREAT DISCOURSES ON THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

We have now had a glimpse of the general spirit and tendencies of the life and work of Jesus. Before we follow his history further, let us turn to a consideration of his chief teachings. The outlines of five of his great discourses have been preserved to us in the gospels. Matthew has woven them all into one, viz., the so-called "Sermon on the Mount," but in the gospel of Luke they are still found mostly in their original setting. Let us briefly consider each discourse by itself.

(a) The Sermon on the Mount.

Lk. 6: 20-49 = Mt. 5: 1-12, 38-48; 7: 1-5, 12, 15-27.

In this discourse Jesus sets forth the Christian character-ideal. He begins with a golden chain of beatitudes:

*Harmonists commonly place here the Call of the Twelve, Mk. 3: 13-19. Compare § 12a.

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
For theirs is the kingdom of God.
Blessed are the contrite of heart,
For they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek and lowly,
For they shall inherit great reward.
Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness,
For they shall be filled.
Blessed are they that are compassionate,
For they shall receive compassion.
Blessed are the pure of soul,
For they shall see God.
Blessed are the friendly and peace-loving,
For they shall be called sons of God.

Then he continues with an exposition of the truly Christian character is expressing itself in love and good-will towards all men:

"Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time
"Eye for eye and tooth for tooth," but I say unto you,
Resist not him that doeth thee evil. To him that
smiteth thee upon the right cheek, turn the other also.
If any man would go to law with thee and take away
thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. If thou art im-
pressed for one mile, go two. Give to him that asketh
thee and from him that would borrow of thee turn not
thou away. *And as ye would that men should do unto
you, do ye also to them likewise.*"

"Do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse
you, pray for them that revile you and love your
enemies that ye may be sons of your Father in heaven,
for he is kind toward the thankless and sinful. He
maketh his sun to rise upon the evil and the good and
sendeth rain upon the righteous and unrighteous. For
if ye love them that love you, what excellence is it, do

not publicans also do the same? And if ye wish well to your brethren only, what do ye more than others, do not even Gentiles the same? *Be ye therefore perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.*"

"Condemn not that ye be not condemned, for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you."

"And why dost thou spy out a mote in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam in thine own eye? Or how sayest thou to thy brother, "Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye!" and behold a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye and then thou shalt not be tempted to judge thy brother."

The discourse closes with a solemn warning against confidence in mere profession:

"The tree is known by its fruit, of thorns men do not seek figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good, but the evil man out of his evil heart bringeth forth that which is evil."

"Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, is like unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house and it fell not, for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these words of mine and doeth them not, is like unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew and smote upon that house, and it fell—and great was the fall thereof."

This is the most remarkable discourse in all literature. Many beautiful stories of love and wifely devotion have been told in all ages, but

they reach not to a love that includes the enemy. The doctrine of good-will, of an open heart to all men, even for those who seek to do us injury, is that which exalts Christianity above every other name. However, it goes considerably against the grain of human nature to be willing to acknowledge this as our duty. It is out of the question, of course, for us to feel that agreeable sensation which the friendly attitude of others produces in us. But that is their virtue, not ours. Neither must we emasculate the words of Jesus by arguing that they interfere with the duty of self-defence. This teaching is not an immoral doctrine, but a shaft aimed at the evil of hatred and lust of retaliation in our heart. Under insult our forbearance is the only thing that can increase the total sum of good in the world. If a fellowman insists on being our enemy, that should not drag us down into becoming his. If he will be evil, we may still show him, that nevertheless our heart remains open to him and desires fellowship with the good that he is burying in his soul.

Sometimes the charge of weakness and femininity is brought against this doctrine of Jesus. It is claimed that it unduly emphasizes the merely passive virtues of submission. But Jesus did not at all preach cowardly submis-

sion to the inevitable. He taught its conquest, but by way of a higher manhood. His words are to be taken without any paring down. They demand more of us than, womanlike, to meet our enemy with a smile, while keeping the gall and bitterness in the heart. Merely to do, or to wish, our enemy no harm is not even the beginning of Christianity.—Anybody can seek revenge, anybody can strike back when he is struck. But it takes a rare self mastery to turn the other cheek. The real hero is not the bully, but the man who can control his bad blood. It is not easy to follow Jesus, but they who are not able to go with him are "lights in the world and the salt of the earth." (Mt. 5: 13-16).

The Good Samaritan.

The doctrine of the Sermon on the Mount is very beautifully illustrated in a parable of Jesus (Lk. 10: 25-37). It is such a gem that I must quote it in full. A scribe had asked him what he should do to inherit eternal life. Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law, how readest thou?" He answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself." "Thou hast answered right," Jesus replied, "this do and thou shalt live." But he, desiring to justify him-

self said, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus made answer and said: "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers. They stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest was going down that way, and when he saw him, passed by on the other side. In like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was, and when he saw him, was moved with compassion, and came to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine. Then he set him upon his own beast, brought him to an inn and took care of him. On the morrow he took out two shillings, gave them to the host and said, "Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back, will repay thee.' Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?" The scribe answered, "He that showed him mercy." And Jesus said unto him, "*Go, and do thou likewise!*"

THE FIVE GREAT DISCOURSES.

(b) *Sincerity in our Moral Life. (Insufficiency of Pharisaic Righteousness.)* Mt. 5:20-37.

In the second great discourse Jesus exhibits the insufficiency of Pharisaic righteousness. He shows that real goodness does not consist in the most painfully literal observance of the law of Moses, as the scribes taught, nor even in correct external conduct, but that everything depends on the underlying motive of the heart. He commenced his sermon by saying to his disciples :

"Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God."

Then he gives a number of illustrative examples, of which I quote only one :

"Ye have heard that it was said, 'Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever killeth shall be in danger of the judgment:' but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, 'Thou Empty-head,' shall be in danger of the council. And whosoever shall say, 'Thou godless fool,' shall be in danger of the hell of fire."

And further he points out that before God

a clean heart is valued far above religious devotion :

“If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.”

It is easier to perform religious duties punctually and acquire saintship by offering prayers and sacrifices than to go and seek reconciliation with those whom we have offended.

THE FIVE GREAT DISCOURSES.

(c) *On the Inwardness of True Religion.*

Mt. 6:1-8, 16-18.

Jesus' third great discourse is on the inwardness of true religion. A man's relation to his God is a sacred thing. It is not to be made a show of before the world.

"Take heed," Jesus said, "that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them: else ye have no reward with your Father in heaven."

"When therefore thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet before thee as the hypocrites do. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret. And thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.

"And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have received their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.

"And in praying do not use vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do, for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him."

THE FIVE GREAT DISCOURSES.

(d) *Prayer and the Life of Fellowship with God.*

Mt. 6: 9-13; 7: 7-11 = Lk. 11: 1-13.

This leads us directly to the next discourse which is on prayer and the life of fellowship with God. "After this manner therefore pray ye:

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done,
As in heaven, so on earth.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we also have forgiven our debtors.
And bring us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil."

Such praying shall not fail of God's response:

"Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, who, if his child shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone; or if he shall ask for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give

the good to them that ask him?" (Compare Mk. 11: 22-25.)

It is not the multitude of words that brings the answer to prayer. It is not gifts that are its blessing; "prayer is the spirit speaking truth to Truth." Fellowship with the Father of our spirits is its end and great reward.

THE FIVE GREAT DISCOURSES.

*(e) Trust in God and the True Goal of Life.**

Mt. 6: 19-34 = Lk. 12: 13-34.

The fifth and last of the great discourses of Jesus has a charm all its own. It sets forth deliverance from daily anxiety by a life of child-like confidence in the providence of God, teaching us the high purpose of our existence, that not to eat and drink and dress, but for the kingdom of God we were born.

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth,
Where moth and rust consume;
Where thieves break through and steal:
But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,
Where moth and rust doth not consume,
And where thieves do not break through and steal.
FOR WHERE THY TREASURE IS,
THERE WILL THY HEART BE ALSO.

No man can serve two masters,
Either he will hate the one
And love the other;
Or else he will hold to one
And despise the other.
YE CANNOT SERVE GOD AND MAMMON."

* * *

Therefore I say unto you:

"Be not anxious for your life,

*Comp. The Parable of the Rich Fool. Lk. 12: 13-21.

What ye shall eat,
Or what ye shall drink;
Nor yet for your body,
What ye shall put on.
IS NOT THE LIFE MORE THAN THE FOOD,
AND THE BODY MORE THAN RAIMENT?"

Consider the ravens,
That they sow not,
Neither do they reap,
Nor gather into barns
And your heavenly Father feedeth them:
OF HOW MUCH MORE VALUE ARE YE THAN
THE BIRDS!"

And who of you by being anxious can add
one cubit unto the measure of his life? And
why are ye anxious concerning raiment?

Consider the lilies of the field,
How they grow.
They toil not,
Neither do they spin:
Yet I say unto you
That even Solomon in all his glory
Was not arrayed like one of these.
But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field,
Which to-day is
And to-morrow is cast into the oven:
SHALL HE NOT MUCH MORE CLOTHE YOU,
O YE OF LITTLE FAITH?

Be not therefore anxious, saying,
What shall we eat,
Or, what shall we drink,
Or, wherewithal shall we be clothed?
After all these things do the Gentiles seek,

BUT SEEK YE FIRST HIS KINGDOM
AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS,
AND ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED
UNTO YOU.

You say, that is beautiful,—for the rich, who know nothing of hard times, but for us who eat our bread in the sweat of our brow it is different. All that I can answer, is, that this was not spoken by one rolling in wealth. They are the words of a carpenter who, by the labor of his hands had toiled for his living and that of those dependent upon him, before he began to preach. He knew whereof he spoke. It is not a blessing to be poor, but Jesus has shown us how trust in God can take the sting out of honest poverty; and how, by seeking heavenly treasure with an undivided heart, even the poorest of the poor may have a fulness and satisfaction of life, for which they that trust in riches, strive in vain.

THE FIVE GREAT DISCOURSES.

(f) Discipleship Exacting.

These five discourses contain all the fundamental elements of Jesus' teachings. Underlying them is the deep and firm conviction that the controlling principle of the universe, the great ALL-FATHER, is our father and God: the fountainhead of our spiritual life to whom we are akin in our better nature. Each discourse shows a different facet of the jewel which the Christian life by the grace of God through Jesus Christ may be.

True religion, then, according to the great teacher from Nazareth, consists of these five things:

1. Love and good-will toward our fellow-men.
2. Integrity in our moral life.
3. Sincerity in our religion.
4. Fellowship with the living God.
5. The kingdom of the noble and the true, the master passion of our soul.

This is not an easy creed to subscribe unto, but it is a confession of faith eminently worthy of God and man.

"Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth

to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. But narrow is the gate and straitened the way that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it." (Mt. 7: 13, 14.)

Jesus never aimed at numbers. He discouraged more than he invited to follow him. A certain man said unto him, "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of heaven have nests; but the son of man hath not where to lay his head." Another said to him, "I will follow thee, but suffer me first to go and bury my father." But Jesus replied, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but go thou and publish abroad the kingdom of God." And still another said, "I will follow thee, Lord, but first suffer me to bid farewell to them that are at my house." To him Jesus said, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Lk. 9: 57-62; = Mt. 8: 19-22).

To all half-hearted disciples Jesus unhesitatingly applied the sifting-process. He warned all cowards to stay at home. "For which of you," he cautioned them, "desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have wherewith to complete it. Lest haply when he hath laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all that behold

begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build, but he could not finish.' Or what king, as he goeth forth to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand. So therefore whosoever he be of you that doth not bear his own cross and renounceth all that he hath to come after me, cannot be my disciple (Lk. 14: 25-35).

Young man, are you burning with passion to do brave deeds, here is the captain to lead you into the battle royal.

THE GALILEAN MINISTRY.

(Continued.)

§ 10. *The Faith of the Centurion.*

Mt. 8:5-13 = Lk. 7: 1-10; 13:28-30. (John 4:46-54.)

It was not only to the Jews that the gospel was preached at Capernaum, for we read of a heathen who came to Jesus there. A garrison, probably of Herod Antipas, seems to have been lodged at Capernaum. Its commander, the centurion, was a Gentile and he had a sick servant. He had heard of the cures of Jesus and came to him, entreating him, "Lord, my servant lieth in the house, sick of paralysis, grievously tormented." Jesus answered, "I will come and heal him." But the centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, having soldiers under my command; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goeth; and to another, 'Come,' and he cometh; and to my servant, 'Do this, and he doeth it.' " When Jesus heard this he marveled, and said to them that followed, "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Isreal. And I say unto you that many shall come from the east and the west and shall

sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of God; but the sons of the kingdom (i. e. the Jews) shall be cast out into the outer darkness; there shall be weeping and the gnashing of teeth." And Jesus said unto the centurion, "Go thy way; as thou hast believed so be it done to thee." And his servant was healed.

So it seems that from the beginning the gospel found a more ready acceptance from Gentiles than it ever received from Jews. The gospel of Jesus was one of universal brotherhood, it was something more than a mere patch upon an old garment, it could not be confined by the old wine-skins of Jewish exclusiveness. It was a new life, bursting race-hatred and leveling class-distinctions, proclaiming that all nations, yea, all the children of men, are God's chosen people. Here in Capernaum, the earliest scene of Jesus' ministry, Christianity began its world-wide conquest of heathenism that shall continue until Christ become the light of all nations.

§ 11. *Reception of Jesus and His Message.*

(a) *The Messengers from John the Baptist.*

Mt. 11: 2-19 = Lk. 7: 18-28, 31-35; 16: 16.

We naturally ask, Was Jesus' Capernaum ministry successful? We are more interested in the torrent that comes tearing down the mountain side than in the deep and silently flowing river. We worship a dazzling flash-light-success and judge a thing by the noise it makes oftener than by its abiding value. Well, was Jesus' ministry a success? It was, for the crowds ran after him. But Jesus was deeply disappointed in them. He had not courted their curiosity, nor sought their applause. He wanted to save their souls, but they responded not to the spirituality of his message.

The fact was, the people were considerably perplexed who this young teacher really was. Even John the Baptist was by no means clear in his mind. Therefore he sent from his prison two messengers to elicit from Jesus himself a definite answer. They asked him, "Art thou he that cometh, or wait we for another?" Jesus did not answer directly, but said: "Go tell John the things which ye hear and see: Blind

(hearts) receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, those dead (in spirit) rise to life and the poor have good tidings preached to them. Blessed is he who shall find no occasion of stumbling in me. I am Messiah, nay more, the Anointed of God, but not the earthly king of Israel's fleshly hope."

Jesus revered John, and when his messengers had left, he paid him the highest tribute any man ever received. He said to the multitudes, "What went ye out into the wilderness to see, a reed shaken by the wind? But what went ye out to see, a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft raiment are in king's houses. But wherefore went ye out to see, a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written :

'Behold I send my messenger before thy face
Who shall prepare thy way before thee.'

Verily, I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist.—Yet he that is but little in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

(b) The Spiritual Apathy of the Multitudes.

Mt. 11: 16-24; Lk. 10: 13-15.

But the multitudes found fault with both the herald and the preacher of the kingdom of God. Neither Jesus nor John pleased them. Of John they said, "He is too religious," of Jesus, "He is not religious at all." This apathy toward things spiritual provoked Jesus to say, "Whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the marketplace, who call unto their fellows and say, 'We piped unto you and ye did not dance; we wailed and ye did not mourn.' For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He hath a demon.' The son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!'"

Then began he to upraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto the Bethsaida! And thou, Capernaum! shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? Thou shalt go down unto Hades; for if the mighty works had been done in Sodom, which were done in thee, it would have remained until this day."

(c) *The Beelzebub Calumny and Request for Signs.*

Mk. 3:20-30; Mt. 9:32-34; 12:22-45 = Lk. 11:14-32;
12:10.

Jesus not only met unresponsiveness from the multitude, he also suffered persecution from his enemies, the scribes and Pharisees. His miracles and compassionate cures of the sick they could not deny, but they found an evil explanation for them. They said, "He casts out demons?" "O yes." "But it is Beelzebub himself ordering the lesser demons about." Thus their bigotry interpreted his works. This was nothing less than to call good evil; a malicious perjurying of truth's own witness. Therefore Jesus charged them with committing an unpardonable sin and uttering blasphemy against the holy Spirit.

For his teachings the scribes had no ear, by a wicked misinterpretation they had gotten rid of his cures and now triumphantly they come to him, saying: "If you are somebody, show us a miracle from heaven." But hearts untouched by the Sermon on the Mount are not worth converting by miracles. Light is of no use to him whose eye is evil (Mt. 6:22, 23 = Lk. 11:33-36). Jesus only strove to be a teacher of truth, not a miracle monger. He answered

his opponents, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall be no sign given it but the sign of Jonah. The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah is here. The fardd of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and condemn it: for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here."

(d) *Jesus' Unbelieving Kinsfolk.*

Mk. 3: 21, 31-35.

In spite of the great outward following of Jesus, the number of his real disciples must have been small, for even his friends and kinsfolk did not believe in him. They thought him beside himself. However, the few followers he had were the closer friends. There is a spiritual kinship which is higher than the natural. A community of inner experience binds men closer than the ties of blood. When Jesus at one time was told that his mother and brethren, standing without, desired to see him, he said, "Who is my mother and my brethren?"

Then pointing to his disciples, he said, "Behold my true kinsfolk! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and sister."

(e) *The Parables of the Kingdom.**

Mk. 4: 1-34.

It is in the light of such experiences that we must understand many of Jesus' parables. Standing by the sea of Galilee he spoke of the reception his work had received in these words: "Behold, the sower went forth to sow, and it came to pass as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside, and the birds came and devoured it. And other fell on the rocky ground, where it had not much earth; and straightway it sprang up, because it had no deepness of earth, and when the sun was risen it was scorched, and because it had no root, it withered away. And other fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And other fell into the good ground, and yielded fruit, some more, some less." It was Jesus' lot, like every one else's, who works for the betterment of humanity, to

* Compare here also the Parable of the Seed Growing Secretly, Mk. 4:26-29; the Parable of the Tares, Mt. 13:24-30, and the Parable of the Drag-net, Mt. 13:47-50.

meet the unreceptive, the fickle and the people of divided hearts.

The work of building up the kingdom of God is full of discouragements. It is like digging gold: for the sake of a few grains of precious metal, you must shovel tons of sand. But in spite of disappointment Jesus' faith did not waver. He saw that his work was small in the beginning, but he knew that by reason of its inherent vitality it would conquer in the end. "It is like unto a grain of mustard seed," he comforted himself, "which a man took and sowed in his field; which indeed is less than all the seeds, but when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of heaven come and lodge in the branches thereof. The kingdom I build is like a bit of leaven, though a woman hide it in three measures of meal, it will yet leaven the whole mass."

If the kingdom of God was not bulky, it was nevertheless precious, as a "treasure hid in the field, which a man found and hid and in his joy goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." Or, as "a merchant seeking goodly pearls, who having found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." (Mt. 13: 44-46).

§ 12. *Evangelizing Galilee.*

(a) *Miracles in Galilee.* Mk. 4:35-5:43. (Lk. 7:11-17).

It seems that Jesus felt any further work in and around Capernaum would be useless, so he went with the Twelve whom he had selected from his wider following for deeper instruction in the mysteries of the kingdom of God (Mk. 3:13-19; 4:11, on an evangelizing tour through Galilee. In these journeys quite a number of miracles occurred, but we have not time to relate them in detail. Among others there was the stilling of the storm on the sea of Galilee and the healing of a demoniac in the country of the Gerasenes. Since this was attended by the drowning of a number of swine, Jesus was requested to leave the country. After returning to the Capernaum side of the lake he was met by Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, whose daughter was at the point of death. He entreated Jesus to come and heal her. A delay was caused by a woman in the crowd, having an issue of blood, who contrived to touch Jesus' garments and was cured. In the meantime Jairus received a message that his daughter had died. Jesus, nevertheless, encouraged him,

went with him to the house and the little girl was restored to life.*

(b) *Rejected at Nazareth.* Mk. 6:1-6; (Lk. 4:16-30).

At this time Jesus also came to Nazareth, his native village, and preached to his townsmen in the synagogue. Though admiring him at first, they soon became offended at his words and drove him out.

(c) *The Twelve Sent Out.* Mk. 6:6-13.

In spite of these set-backs the fame of Jesus still increased. He did not only preach himself, but also sent his disciples, two by two, on a preaching tour. They were not to go in royal style, but as simple messengers, neither wearing two coats, nor their pockets filled with gold and silver. Their mission was to preach that men should repent and incidentally they anointed the sick with oil and cast out demons.

If Jesus met with much discouragement in his work, we must not forget that it also had its joys. It is a beneficent constitution of our nature that one hour of joy can blot out years of sorrow. Our most satisfying emotions come

* Compare the Raising of the Widow's Son at Nain. Lk. 7:11-17.

to us through religion. Jesus experienced them to the full. You remember how his baptismal experience had lifted his soul above the earth. Likewise when he found a lonely woman by the well of Samaria who opened her heart to him and went away a better person, it so filled him with joy that he could not eat the meal his disciples had prepared for him and he had to tell them, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to accomplish his work." (John 4:34). It was in such an hour of religious exaltation that he spoke the sweetest words that fell from his lips:

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden,
And I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me:
For I am meek and lowly in heart;
And ye shall find rest unto your souls,
For my yoke is easy and my burden is delight."
(Mt. 11:28-30. Compare Lk. 10:17-20).

§ 13. *The Turning Point. Jesus' Loss of Popular Favor.* The Northern Journeys.*

Jesus was now at the height of his popularity, and yet the turning point had come. The multitude cared not for his spiritual kingdom and he cared not for their enthusiasm over a politically restored Israel. So the parting of the ways was inevitable. When the people saw clearly that he had no inclination to meet their wishes, they began to murmur. They forsook him and perhaps began to listen to the scribes and Pharisees. At this point the gospels leave us considerably in the dark as to the actual course of events. We see that Jesus gives up his public work, leaves the scenes of his former labors, withdraws to Gentile territory in the North and remains in hiding. He devotes his time to the instruction of his disciples and seems to have come to an altogether different view of the outcome of his own work. Whether, then, this withdrawal to the North

* We pass over here without comment the following gospel-narratives:

1. The Discourse against the Fear of Men. Mt. 10: 24-39 = Lk. 12: 1-12, 49-53.
2. The Account of the Death of John the Baptist. Mk. 6: 14-29.
3. The Feeding of the Five Thousand. Mk. 6: 31-44.
4. The Walking on the Sea. Mk. 6: 45-52.
5. The Feeding of the Four Thousand. Mk. 8: 1-21.
6. The Discourse on the Bread of Life. John 6: 1-71.

was due to persecution, or because he had to fight out a new battle in his inner life, or both, we do not precisely know.

§ 14. *The Syrophenician Woman.*

Mk. 7: 24-30.

However, he did not altogether succeed in hiding himself. After he had crossed the border line from Galilee into the region of Tyre and Sidon, a Syrophenician woman heard of him. We do not know whether she was rich or poor, but there was a great sorrow in her life—she had an afflicted daughter. And what will not a mother do in such a plight. She was a Gentile, and well she knew Jewish pride and haughtiness. The Jews divided the world into the seed of Abraham and sinners of the Gentiles, whom they called dogs. But this mother thought not of the rebuke she was sure to meet from a Jewish scribe. She had come, if need be, to melt a heart of stone with her entreaty. She fell down before Jesus, and begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. But Jesus acted strangely. He seemed to turn a deaf ear to this mother's request. He answered her in the orthodox fashion as rabban Shammai would

have answered her. "Let the children first be filled, for it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." But love quickened the mother's reasoning powers: she turned the grounds of his refusal into an argument for her cause. "True Lord," she said, "but even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." Jesus had no intention of torturing the pleading woman, but he allowed himself the luxury of witnessing how a mother's love surmounts all obstacles and turns defeat into victory. So he answered her, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it done unto thee even as thou wilt."

§ 15. *Journey to Caesarea Philippi. Conflict with the Jewish Messianic Ideal.*

Mk. 8: 27-9: 1.

Jesus pushed this journey as far as Sidon, but we have no particulars. Then he seems to have crossed the river Leontes and returned through Decapolis to the sea of Galilee. Here he healed a deaf-mute (Mk. 7: 31-37) and at Bethsaida a blind man (Mk. 8: 22-26). Another collision with the Pharisees occurred (Mk. 8: 11-21), whereupon he went North again, but this time into the region of Cæsarea Philippi. Here we get a glimpse once more of his inner life. He asked his disciples what the people were saying concerning him. They told him, "Some say, 'John the Baptist'; others, 'Elijah,' others, 'One of the prophets.'" Then he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter, as spokesman of the rest, answered: "Thou art the Christ." It is important, however, for us to remember that the Jews did not think of Christ as we do. We think of him as the savior of the world, but they knew only of the One who should sit upon the throne of David and make the Jews the ruling nation of the world. The Jewish people

§ 15 *JOURNEY TO CÆSAREA PHILIPPI.* 87

in general had not thought of Jesus as the Christ. How could they, since he gathered no army and did not miraculously drive out the Romans? It is doubtful that even the disciples had definitely thought of him as the Christ much before this time. Jesus certainly did not mean to be the kind of Christ which they wished him to be. He was interested in the kingdom of love and truth, not in temporal power. This kingdom, he had come to realize by his past experiences, would not come in a day, for people were not as enthusiastic about changing their hearts as holding offices in Messiah's kingdom. He realized that he would not see the full establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth. And more, he began to feel, that if he were to remain true to his mission it would end in death. He knew the temper of the Pharisees, and that the elders of his people had already rejected him.

If he nevertheless continued his work, the conflict could only terminate in his martyrdom. He had come to the crisis. How shall he decide? Continue and die, or cease his work and by cowardly silence purchase his life? He was not a coward, he held truth dearer than life and so he determined to conquer by dying. The path of duty and obedience to the will of God was clear, but it opened into the

jaws of death. He might have had an honored name among his people, like Hillel or Gamaliel, if he had accepted Pharisaism. He might have been the pet of popular enthusiasm, had he befriended Jewish Messianism. But for the sake of being true, he closed, with his own hands, this double door of success, accepting defeat and the cross. This is the hardest testing that can come to a man, but Jesus did not flinch.

Yet we must not suppose that he was unsusceptible to the temptation. Peter urged him to stay away from Jerusalem, and avoid the catastrophe (Mk. 8:32). That certainly seemed the part of wisdom, but what would all his teachings have been worth, had he failed here? We would have cried, "True words, admirable doctrines!" But then, we know our duties well enough and can get along without the moralists who feel themselves called to preach us the truth, though we are all damned. We need some sympathetic heart to show us how to live the truth. It is the charm of Jesus' doctrines that he practiced them first and then preached them.

Peter's suggestion was a perfectly legitimate one, for self-preservation is the ordinary law of life, but it is not its highest law. Jesus lived not for himself, and when that which is good

hinders a higher good, it becomes evil, therefore, "Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." (Mk. 8:33). From this time on Jesus plainly taught his disciples the unworldliness of his kingdom. "If any man would come after me," he said, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall save it." Strange teaching—to save one's life by losing it! And yet no truer words were ever uttered, for he that loseth his life in the labor of love for his fellow-men, truly findeth it. Acts of kindness, deeds of love, a mother's sacrifice for her babe, a life in which unselfishness reigns supreme, these give an unfailing supply of peace of soul and happiness of heart, beside which the gain of the whole world is as nothing.

§ 16. *The Transfiguration.*

Mk. 9:2-8.

Still, of ourselves we are not sufficient for these things. Our spirits are still in bondage to the flesh. A few days after this Jesus with three of his most intimate disciples ascended a

mountain that he might in prayer to God find heaven's help to carry out his resolution. And a blessed experience, beyond literal description, was vouchsafed to him there; since a prayer for help to do our duty never remains unanswered. The gospels give us Jesus' mountain-experience clothed in oriental figure, which we can no longer fully unravel. But this is certain, he was there transfigured, and found strength to face his coming ordeal, and go unwavering to Jerusalem to his death.

§ 17. *The Last Days in Galilee.* †*

Mk. 9:9-50.

What a difference there is now between Jesus and his disciples. They are dreaming of wearing crowns and sitting on thrones, but he is going to the cross. At the foot of the mountain he healed an epileptic boy (Mk. 9:14-29), then he returned to Galilee (Mk. 9:30), but not to preach again. He spent but few days there, which he devoted to further instruction of his disciples. They were still sadly in need of it. Since they had placed their messianic hopes in Jesus, their hearts were filled with visions of earthly glory and they began to dispute (who should be the greatest among them. (Mk. 9:33-37). After all their association with Jesus they had not yet learned the true kingdom's first law, which readeth, "If any man would be first, he shall be last and servant of all" (Mk. 9:35).

Not only were the disciples self-conceited and vainglorious, they were also narrow-

* The gospel of John records here several journeys of Jesus to Jerusalem, viz., to the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of Dedication. The student should read the gospel of John here in the following order: John 7:1-14, 25-36, 45-52; 7:37-44; 8:21-59; 9:1-41; 10:19-21; 8:12-20; 10:22-29; 10:1-18, 30-42.

† Consult also Mt. 17:24-27 for an account of how Jesus paid his temple-tax.

minded. John and some others had met a man casting out demons in Jesus' name. Full of indignation they forbade him because he followed not after them. But Jesus thought very differently about it. He said, "Forbid him not, for there is no man who shall do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me. He that is not against us, is for us." (Mk. 9: 38-40). Magnanimity is a much unpracticed Christian virtue. The evil spirits of pride and jealousy, vanity and narrow-mindedness, choke this precious tender plant. But cast out the evil brood, even if it has grown as close to our flesh as hand or eye. "If thy hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off. And if thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off. And if thine eye cause thee to stumble, pluck it out. It is good for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes and be cast into hell." (Mk. 9: 43-50).

§ 18. *The Duty of Forgiving.*

Mk. 9:42; Mt. 18:7-35 = Lk. 17:1-4.

Instead of forever having an eye to our own interests, we should the rather be careful to do no harm to our neighbor. "Woe to him through whom occasions of stumbling come, it were well for him if a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were thrown into the sea, rather than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble."

Then came Peter and said unto him, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him—until seven times?" Jesus saith unto him, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven. There was a certain king who would make a reckoning with his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, that owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not wherewith to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, 'Lord, have patience with me and I will pay thee all.' And the Lord of that servant being moved

with compassion, released him and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, who owed him a hundred shillings, and he laid hold on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay what thou owest.' So his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will pay thee.' But he would not, and went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was due. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceeding sorry, and came and told unto their Lord all that was done. Then his lord called him unto him, and saith to him, 'Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besoughtest me; shouldest not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee?' And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due. So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts."

THE PARABLES OF GRACE.

JESUS' TEACHING CONCERNING THE
RECONCILIATION OF SINFUL
MAN WITH GOD.

§ 19. *The Parables of Grace.*

Deep down in man's heart there is a feeling of uneasiness on account of his shortcomings. In a thousand ways he has tried to devise some means whereby to wash away his guilt before God. And Jesus would fail to be a savior to our souls unless he could satisfy the accuser in our breast, for all means of salvation must in the end prove unavailing that do not save us from a guilty conscience. Sometimes man has stoutly denied his guilt, sometimes charged it upon the author of his being, sometimes denied his God, sometimes presumed that punishment will not overtake the wicked. But generally, we are glad to remark for the honor of our race, he has been more honest. He has acknowledged his debt and sought some way wherewith to pay it. He has brought gifts to God, offered sacrifices, done penance, fasted, tortured himself and fled from the world. He has invented systems of justification by beliefs or by works and has sought for substitutes, but all, all in vain. Has Jesus an answer for this need?

Yes.

What is it?

That with God, mercy seasons justice.

Yet Jesus has not made sin the less. He taught us that God is pure and holy, but not a God of implacable wrath. Not a tyrant untouched with the weakness and suffering of his subjects, but a loving father, pleased with every endeavor, however feeble and imperfect, which His children make, to pattern their life after his will.

But what shall the wayward child and prodigal son do?

Return home.

But who shall pay his debts and how shall his sins be washed away? Sins are not debts, they are not without the man, or separate from him, they are part of his character, therefore they cannot be paid for by another. Goodness and badness of heart are not transferable commodities, moral qualities are not subjects of barter or exchange.

How then can his sins be washed away? They cannot be washed away, they can only be forgiven. What cannot be covered by the Father's love cannot be covered at all.

Jesus has set forth his answer to the question of sinful man's restoration to acceptance with God in four matchless parables of grace:

(a) *The Parable of the Lost Sheep.*

Lk. 15: 3-7 = Mt. 18: 10-14.

And he spake unto them this parable, saying:

"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and goeth after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and his neighbors, saying unto them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.' I say unto you, *that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, which think they need no repentance.*"

(b) *The Parable of the Lost Piece of Silver.*

Lk. 15: 8-10.

"Or what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a lamp, and sweep the house, and seek diligently until she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost.' *Even so, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.*"

(c) *The Parable of the Father's Welcome to the Prodigal Son.*

Lk. 15: 11-32. Compare Mt. 21: 28-32.

And he said unto them, "A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me my portion of the inheritance.' And he divided unto them his living. Not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country. There he wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And fain he would have been filled with the husks that the swine did eat, but no man gave unto him.

"Then he came to himself and said, 'How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son, but make me as one of thy hired servants.' So he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said unto him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring the fatted calf, kill it, and let us eat, and make merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'

"Now the elder son was in the field, and as he came

and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called to him one of the servants, and inquired what these things might be. And he said unto him, 'Thy brother is come, and thy father hath killed the fatted calf because he hath received him safe and sound.' But he was angry and would not go in: and his father came out and entreated him. But he answered and said to his father, 'lo these many years do I serve thee, and I never transgressed a commandment of thine: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But when this thy son came, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou killedst for him the fatted calf.' And he said unto him, 'Son, thou art ever with me, and all that is mine is thine. But it was meet to make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"

(d) *The Parable of the Pharisee and Publican.*

Lk. 18:9-14.

And he spake also this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and set all others at nought:

"Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I get.' But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast saying, 'God, be thou merciful to me, a sinner.' I say unto you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other. For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

The sum of these parables is that God freely and without price forgives the penitent sinner.

But what of the impenitent sinner?

He puts himself beyond the Father's forgiving love, and as there is no other way of salvation in heaven or earth, even God himself cannot help him so long as he abides in his impenitence.

Theologians have told us that justice forbids the free pardon of the sinner, but if it does, love and mercy forbid the perishing of the penitent, and where law does not avail, mercy prevails.—We shall do well not to be wise beyond that which is written.

THE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM
(THROUGH PEREA).

§ 20. *The Inhospitable Samaritans.*

Lk. 9: 51-56.

We must return to the thread of our narrative. The last days in Galilee were spent and Jesus turned his face toward Jerusalem (Mk. 10: 1f). He started to go through Samaria, but the Samaritans, between whom and the Jews there was much tenderly-nursed ill-feeling on account of their slight differences in religion, would not entertain Jesus over night on a journey to the Jewish Passover. John and James were ready to take vengeance, and thought that in such a righteous cause they had heaven at their command. They came to Jesus saying, "Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven, and consume them?" But Jesus turned and rebuked them. He revenged not himself. He took the other road through Perea, leisurely journeying to Jerusalem to the feast, teaching the multitudes on the way.

§ 21. *Jesus Welcomes Children.**

Mk. 10: 13-16.

At one of the halting-places some mothers brought their children to him that he might touch and bless them. The disciples had no patience with the little ones and drove the mothers away. But Jesus, seeing this, was indignant and said to them, "Suffer the little children to come to me; forbid them not, for to such belongeth the kingdom of God. Verily, I say unto you, 'Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein.' " And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.

* We pass over the Pharisees' Question about Divorce. Mk. 10: 2-12.

JESUS AND WEALTH.

§ 22. *Jesus and Wealth. (The Rich Young Man, etc.).*

Mk. 10: 17-31.

On this journey there also came to him a young man, who, falling upon his knees, said, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Jesus said unto him, "Why callest thou me good, none is good save one, even God. Thou knowest the commandments, 'Do not kill,' 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honor thy father and mother.'" The young man said unto him, "Master, all these have I observed from my youth." And Jesus, looking upon him, loved him and said unto him, "One thing thou lackest, 'Go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me.'" But his countenance fell at the saying, and he went away sorrowful, for he was one that had great possessions.

Jesus did not call men to poverty, but often wealth stands in the way of duty. He meant to offer this young man a better opportunity, to

make of him another Paul, preaching to the ages, instead of being a mere administrator of his vast estates. But he could not quite stand the test. Sorrowfully Jesus turned to his disciples and said: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And his disciples were astonished exceedingly, saying unto him, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looking upon them saith, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God."

Peter then began to say unto him, "Lo, we have left all and followed thee." Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren or sisters, or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel's sake, but he shall receive of higher blessings, a hundredfold now in this time, and in the world to come eternal life. And many that are first shall be last, and the last first."

But the service of God must not be polluted by the selfish desire for reward. The service itself is the blessing, not the pay received for it. This is the meaning of the following parable: (Lk. 17: 7-10), "Who is there of you,

having a servant plowing or keeping sheep, that will say unto him when he comes in from the field, 'Come straightway and sit down to meat,' and will not rather say unto him, 'Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself and serve me, till I have eaten, and afterward thou shalt eat and drink.' Doth he thank the servant because he did the things that were commanded? Even so ye also, when ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say 'We are servants without merit, we have done no more than is our duty to do.' '*

* Compare here also the Parable of the Unrighteous Steward, Lk. 16: 1-12; the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Lk. 16: 19-31, and the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard, Mt. 20: 1-16.

§ 23. *The Unholy Ambition of James and John.*

Mk. 10: 35-45.

There was a great deal of undesirable human nature about these first disciples of Jesus. Much of his instruction went in at one ear and out at the other. Self-seeking and vanity are deeply ingrained in human flesh. A large part of our religious zeal comes from the desire to strut with starry crowns through golden streets in heaven, yet Jesus promised his disciples more crosses than crowns. He offers no other reward than service. But it is hard to teach them so. Three times (Mk. 8: 31f; 9: 30f; 10: 32f) Jesus had plainly told his disciples of the ignominious death to which he was going, but that did not put an end to the indulgence of their unholy ambitions. If in this life they must be humble, they would make up for it by a double portion of eminence in the life to come. So the very next thing we hear is that James and John come to Jesus and say: "Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall ask of thee." And he said unto them, "What would ye that I should do for you?" They

say unto him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand, in thy glory." But Jesus said unto them, "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" And they said unto him: "We are able." Jesus said unto them: "The cup that I drink, ye shall drink, and with the baptism that I am baptized with shall ye be baptized. But to sit on my right hand, or on my left, is not mine to give; but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared."

When the ten heard it, they began to be moved with indignation concerning James and John. And Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you. Whosoever would become great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be servant of all. For verily, the son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

They that love reward more than service are unfit for the kingdom of God. Truly men need to be born again before they can

enter it, for in it it is accounted more 'blessed to give than to receive.' (Acts 20:35.)

§ 24. *Arrival at Jericho. Zachæus.**

Lk. 19: 1-10.

At last Jesus and his disciples with the crowds going up to Jerusalem, arrive at Jericho. In passing he healed a blind beggar sitting by the way-side (Mk. 10:46-52 compare Mt. 9:27-31) and then found an opportunity such as he most delighted in, viz., of ministering to a burdened soul.

In Jericho there was a man by the name of Zachæus. He was a chief publican and was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the crowd because he was small of stature. Therefore he ran on before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place he looked up and said unto him, "Zachæus, make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." And he made haste and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, "He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner." And

* Compare here "The Raising of Lazarus," John, chapt. XI.

Zachæus stood and said unto Jesus, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold." And Jesus said unto him, "To-day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham."

H

THE LAST DAYS IN JERUSALEM.

§ 25. *The Triumphal Entry. Visit to Bethany.*

Mk. II: I-II.

The festive pilgrims kept on increasing and the procession was drawing near the holy city. The multitudes were full of enthusiasm. As they neared Mt. Olives, a donkey was procured and triumphantly the disciples with the multitudes led Jesus into Jerusalem, shouting, "Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David; Hosanna in the Highest."

It was now eventide and Jesus with the twelve made their way back to Bethany, where he found entertainment during the Passover in the house of Martha and Mary. It may have been at this time, or some earlier visit of Jesus that the following incident (Lk. 10: 38-42) took place in this happy Jewish home. Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet and heard his word. But Martha who was distracted about much serving, came to him, and said, "Lord, carest thou not that my sister leaves me to serve alone, bid her therefore that she help me." But Jesus answered her, "Martha, Martha,

thou art anxious and troubled about many things, but few things are needful, or one. Mary hath chosen a good part, it shall not be taken away from her." (Comp. Lk. 8: 1-3.)

Friendship and the intercourse of heart with heart is better hospitality than royal entertainment.

§ 26. *The Cleansing of the Temple.*

Mk. 11: 12-19.

In the morning Jesus again went into Jerusalem and entered the temple. When he saw how in the house of God there went on bargaining and merchandising, he was stirred in his soul and drove forth the sellers of sacrificial animals and the money-changers, saying, "It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations, but ye have made it a den of robbers."

§ 27. *Jesus Teaching in the Temple.*

Mk. 11: 20-12: 44. (Mt. 23: 1-39 = Lk. 11: 37-54).

But the high-priestly family was running a monopoly of this temple business and derived not a little profit from its extortionate prac-

tices. When they heard how Jesus had interfered with their money-getting, they straightway began to devise means to put him out of the way. And Sadducees as they were, for once they were willing to make common cause against Jesus with their enemies, the Pharisees. Still, they feared the multitudes who favored Jesus, and so they determined to wait till after the feast. Thus for a few days Jesus was left unmolested teaching in the temple, except that his enemies had spies out, to manufacture evidence which might serve as a pretext to put him to death. They had but ill success in this. On the other hand, Jesus, seeing the utter hollowness of religion prevailing in the temple as everywhere else, publicly denounced his enemies. "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because ye shut the kingdom of heaven against men. Ye enter not yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering in, to enter. Ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy and faith. Ye blind guides, that strain out the gnat and swallow the camel." (Mt. 23: 13, 23, 24).—"Beware of the scribes, who desire to walk in long robes, and to have salutations in the market-places, and chief seats in the synagogues,

and chief places at feasts; that they devour widow's houses, even while for a pretence they make long prayers." (Mk. 12: 38-40.)

§ 28. *The Widow's Two Mites.*

Mk. 12: 41-44.

These were mostly days of contention with his persecutors,* yet there were some charming incidents. One took place in the temple. Jesus had sat down over against the treasury and beheld how the multitude cast money into it. And many that were rich cast in much. And there came a poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and said unto them "Verily, I say unto you, This poor widow cast in more than all they which were casting into the treasury; for they all did cast in of their superfluity; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."

She did one of the greatest things that ever were done, she dedicated her all as best she knew to the service of God.

* For the detailed account read Mk. 11: 20-12: 40, and compare John 12: 20-50.

§ 29. *Jesus Anointed by Mary of Bethany.**

Mk. 14:3-9. (John 12:1-8.)

Another beautiful scene took place in Bethany. Undoubtedly his friends there knew his forebodings of his death and the plotting of his enemies against him. As he was sitting at meat in the house of Simon the leper, Mary, having an alabaster cruse of ointment of pure nard, very costly, came and brake the cruse and poured it over his head. Some of the disciples with strict ideas of inflexible utilitarian economy, said among themselves, "To what purpose hath this waste of ointment been made. It might have been sold for above three hundred shillings, and given to the poor." And they murmured against her. But Jesus said, "Why trouble ye her, she hath wrought a good work on me. The poor ye have always with you, and whensoever ye will ye can do them good; but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could; she hath anointed my body beforehand for burying. And verily I say unto you, Wheresoever the gospel shall

* We pass by the Eschatological Discourses, including the Parable of the Talents and of the Ten Virgins and the Last Judgment. Mk., chapt. 13; Mt., chapt. 24, and 25; Lk. 17: 20-37; 18: 1-8; 13: 1-9; 12: 54-59; 19: 11-27.

be preached throughout the whole world, that also, which this woman hath done, shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."

To feed the poor is not the chief mission of Christianity. It has a much higher calling. It is to fill this world with the fragrance of love and plant the flowers of paradise in it. "Whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are pure, think on these things."

THE PASSION HISTORY.

(Mark's Gospel, Chapter xiv. and xv.)

The Passion History.

Mk., chapt. 14 and 15 (Mt., chapt. 26 and 27. Lk., chapt. 22 and 23; John, chapt. 13-19.)

§ 30. *Jesus' Last Day With His Disciples. The Lord's Supper.*

Mk., 14: 10-31.

The passion history is related with great fullness in the gospels, but we cannot stop at details. The rulers of the Jews had determined upon the death of Jesus, yet it was not very clear to them how to bring it about. The crowds were on the side of Jesus, so he could not be mobbed, and they lacked the legal authority to inflict capital punishment. But suddenly things took a strange turn, by which events played into their hands. In some way one of Jesus' own disciples, Judas, had become disaffected and went to the high-priest, offering to betray him into their hands (Mk. 14: 10f). This led them to think that the time for action had come, and though the passover was immediately at hand, they resolved, if possible, to apprehend Jesus.

It was on the day preceding the feast,

on which the paschal lamb must be eaten. This was to be the last day that Jesus was together with his disciples. In the forenoon he had sent two of them to prepare for the evening meal in the upper room of a friend. At the appointed time they were all gathered there.

Jesus had become aware of the disloyalty of Judas and sorrowfully spoke of it at the table, but he did not directly mention the betrayer. Soon after Judas left on his dark errand.

As they were eating the passover, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it and gave to them, and said, "Take ye, this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave to them and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Verily I say unto you, I shall no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." (Mk. 14: 22f).*

When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. On the way there Jesus said to them, "All ye shall be offended; for it is written, 'I will smite the shepherd and

* The student should not fail to read here the great discourses of Jesus in the Gospel of John (in the following order): John 13:1-31a; 15:1-25; 15:26-16:15; 16:16-33; chapt. 17; 13:31-14:31.

the sheep shall be scattered abroad!’ But Peter said unto him, “Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.” These words came from the bottom of his heart. Peter knew his love for his master, but alas, not what the next few hours would bring forth. Therefore Jesus said unto him, “Verily, I say unto thee, that thou to-day, even this night, before the cock crow, shalt deny me.” But Peter spake earnestly, “If I must die with thee, I will not deny thee.” And in like manner said they all.

§ 31. *Gethsemane.*

Mk., 14: 32-52.

So they came to Gethsemane. It was midnight, and darkness and gloom was breaking over the soul of Jesus. But he sought refuge, as so often before, in prayer. He took Peter and James and John aside from the others and said to them, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; abide ye here and watch.” And he went forward a little and fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass away from him. And he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; remove this cup from me, howbeit, not what I will, but what thou wilt.” And he

cometh and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, "Simon, sleepest thou? couldst thou not watch one hour? Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation, the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." And again he went away and prayed saying the same words. And so he did the third time.

Let us tread silently here. This agony and self-mastery is too sacred for curious eyes to look upon. It was the hardest hour that Jesus passed through. Here he felt the weakness of the flesh. He did not want to go to the cross, he prayed that he might escape it. A writer of fiction would disdain such weakness in his hero. Not so Jesus, for the cross was very real to him. It was not the short hours of physical suffering that so weighed him down, but having lived according to the will of his Father and having spent his life in boundless love for his fellow-men, the kingdom of God had not come. His sun seemed to be setting in darkness to rise no more. O child of sorrow, thou art not alone in thy bitter disappointment, the man of Gethsemane drank the cup to the dregs. At last he was enabled to say, "Not my will, but thine be done," but he felt how hard it was to say it.

Is this an hour of weakness in Jesus? No. What help could he have given to us men in

the flesh, if temptation had never touched him. If he had not sometimes felt it hard to walk in the path of duty and right, he might have been an example to angels, but he could not have brought succor to us mortals. The agony was bitter, the struggle was hard—but he came to resignation in the will of God.

The betrayer now came with the band. Peter and the rest proved themselves men of their word. They were ready to go to death with him. Peter drew his sword and would there have shed his last drop of blood in defense of his Lord. But Jesus forbade him. He wanted to be taken prisoner without resistance and complaint. He had won his victory in Gethsemane and death had no more terror for him.

§ 32. *The Trial.*

Mk. 14: 53-15: 15.

Jesus was taken before the high-priest first. Prompted by love for his master, Peter had followed from afar. He must see what was to be done to his Lord. He was a brave man. It was brave to fight single-handed in Gethsemane the armed multitude. It was braver still after that to go to the high-priest's palace and face certain arrest. If he was to

see the outcome, everything depended upon his remaining unrecognized. Accordingly, when he was pointed out by a servant maid, he denied, not his master, but his own identity. And this was a denial, prompted not half so much by fear for himself, as by love to his Lord. Whether this was sin, or only a pardonable confusion, let the Searcher of hearts decide. Had Peter not loved his master so well, he would have fled with the rest and never been tempted to deny his knowledge of Jesus. Some men are greater in their weakness than others in their haughty strength. The cock crew and Peter remembered the words of Jesus and went out and wept bitterly.

It was morning now. The sanhedrin convened in legal session and pronounced Jesus guilty of death. As they could not execute their sentence, they went to Pilate, the Roman procurator, to have it ratified. This was not easy. Pilate soon saw that theirs were the machinations of malice. But if he was unwilling at first to condemn an innocent man, he could soon be coerced into it by threats to make it unpleasant for him at Rome. He tried to wriggle out of it. He put up a murderer, Barabbas, alongside Jesus, for the choice of the priest-instigated mob. When that was without avail, superstitiously he washed his hands

in water, before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man." But he was not, for he condemned the guiltless one. What a tragedy! Innocence and Purity arraigned before a contemptible judge, accused by priests with hatred-filled hearts, clothed in sacred robes so over-holy that they would be defiled by entering the Gentile prætorium. What a revealing of the secrets of men took place here. Pilate stood before his golden opportunity. He was called upon to make a great sacrifice for the right, but was not man enough to meet the occasion. He missed the triumph of his better nature by selling his character for the sake of holding his office. Therefore his name has become the loathing of history, while He whom he condemned shines as the synonym of all that is good.

§ 33. *The Crucifixion, Death and Burial.*

Mk. 15: 16-47

Pilate delivered Jesus over to be scourged and crucified. The Roman soldiers take him and think it an opportune time to mock the Jewish national hope. They place a crown of thorns upon the rejected Messiah, clothe him in

purple and salute him, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

Then they lead him out, making him bear his own cross. They come to Golgatha and in a short time their gruesome work is done. They had nailed him to the cross and erected it between two malefactors. It was nine o'clock in the forenoon. Jesus hung upon the cross under the jeers and mockery of the by-standers. He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," and gave up the ghost (Mk. 15: 34).

Is the cross the reward of uprightness? Tremble, O earth, for the cruel injustice that reigns upon thee. Hide thy face, O sun, thou light of the day, for malice and iniquity have crucified the greater light. And thou veil of the temple, rend thou in twain, for to-day sacrilege has been committed against the Holy One of God.

Where now were the disciples, who a few days previous were planning for the highest seats in the kingdom? Let us pity them. Their highest hope is hanging upon the cross. They are plunged into the darkest of a dark night. Strangers in Jerusalem and without consolation, they had fled. Consternation kept them from the cross. Still, I am glad to tell

you, that their faith did not altogether fail. If Jesus was not the Messiah they had hoped he would be, still they cherished his memory as a prophet sent from God (Lk. 24: 19) who had spoken words to them that were never to be forgotten.

Only the women seem to have been at the cross of Jesus. Woman is a ministering angel in the house of death and sorrow. Jesus died in a few hours. During his life, perhaps in these last few days, he had made at least a few friends that stood high in Jewish circles. One of them, Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the sanhedrin, begged Jesus' body from Pilate and laid it in his own sepulchre. The women looked on. It was Friday evening, with sunset came the sabbath and no more work must be done that day. So they went home, and according to the commandment rested on the sabbath-day.

§ 34. *The Resurrection.*

Mk., chapt. 16; Mt., chapt. 28; Lk., chapt. 24; John
chapt. 20 and 21.

Is this the end of such a life as Jesus had lived? Do all our best endeavors, the noblest aspirations of the soul, do they all end in the grave? Is a tombstone the final fruition of a

life of consecrated service? From the deepest depths of our heart there reverberates again and again the answer No, No, No. For the seed to be laid in the earth is but to live again. Virtue is stronger than the grave, death is not the goal of life.

Sunday morning came and the women returned to the sepulchre to complete the last rites of a Jewish burial, to pay the last loving tribute to the lacerated corpse of their master. But they found the tomb empty and an angel to tell them that he was risen from the dead.

Thus he lived, thus he died, and thus he rose again and ascended to glory.

THE END.

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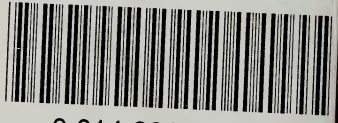
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